

Message to Participants in National Youth Service Day

April 10, 2003

I send greetings to those participating in National Youth Service Day.

Since our Nation's founding, volunteer service has been a vital part of the American experience. Service to others is an expression of responsible citizenship, and now more than ever is a time for our Nation's young people to be active contributors, not spectators.

I created the USA Freedom Corps and the Students in Service to America initiatives to mobilize our citizens and provide opportunities for young people to give back to their communities. As part of these initiatives, I asked all Americans to dedicate at least 4,000 hours over the rest of their lives to serving our Nation through volunteering. Since then, our citizens, and particularly our young people, have responded to my call with an outpouring of kindness that is transforming our Nation one heart and one soul at a time.

National Youth Service Day is a great example of what can happen when dedicated individuals come together to serve a cause greater than self. Across our Nation, millions of young people are participating in projects that help their neighbors in need. By using their time, talents, and compassion to make a difference in the lives of others, these young people are learning to become responsible and engaged citizens in our democratic society.

I commend participants for your energy, idealism, and willingness to serve. I also applaud the more than 60 national partner organizations working with schools, houses of worship, local governments, and community and civic organizations in all 50 states to make this day a success. Your efforts strengthen our Nation and contribute to a future of hope and promise for all.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a productive and memorable day.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 7662—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2003

April 10, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a Nation, we must work to ensure that all our children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve their dreams. On Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2003, we renew our commitment to providing quality education and to teaching our children the values that prepare them for lives as good neighbors and citizens.

Education has always been one of our Nation's top priorities. We place great reliance and confidence in our public education system, recognizing that it is one of the most important institutions of our free society. By helping our young citizens learn and develop skills, education has spurred our progress and prosperity, driven our Nation's economy, and enriched our culture.

Over the last 2 years, my Administration has taken significant action to transform public education in America. In one of the most comprehensive reforms ever passed, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 strengthened our school systems and affirmed our fundamental belief in the promise of every child. By raising expectations and insisting on results, we can make a difference in the lives of all our children.

As part of our commitment to our children's future, we must also teach young Americans to live lives of integrity and purpose, and to realize the importance of loving others and contributing to their communities. These values are first learned within the family, but all of our citizens, and especially our teachers, can support parents in the character education of our children. By guiding young people to understand universal values such as tolerance, honesty, commitment to family, service to others, and respect for the dignity of every life, our schools and communities can help our Nation fulfill its great potential.

For the past 19 years, on the anniversary of his birth, we have recognized the contributions of the Rabbi Menachem Mendel